

**Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development****Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Big Lake Chamber Of Commerce, Inc.****Project Title:**

## **Big Lake Chamber Of Commerce, Inc. - Public Access Docks**

**State Funding Requested: \$ 25,000****House District: 15 - H**

One-Time Need

**Brief Project Description:**

Construction of two public passenger loading docks on Big Lake. This will ensure that there is adequate public boat access to Big Lake.

**Funding Plan:****Total Cost of Project: \$25,000**Funding Secured*Amount FY*Other Pending Requests*Amount FY*Anticipated Future Need*Amount FY*

There is no other funding needed

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

This would fund the construction of public access boat launch docks at both the North and South Shore Big Lake Campgrounds. While there are public boat launch ramps currently available there are no passenger loading docks. This requires that users wade through the water to load and unload passengers and materials. In addition to being an inconvenience for many people the lack of a loading dock makes the current facilities almost impossible for disabled individuals to enter or exit boats either before or after launch. Furthermore, the lack of a dock means that a recently launched boat will block the boat launch until it has been loaded and the boat trailer and vehicle have been parked causing delays in the launch and retrieval of boats.

**Project Timeline:**

Winter 2008/2009.

**Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:**

AK DNR: Mat-Su Area

**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

Contact Name: Bob DeLoach, President

Phone Number: 354-7790

Address: PO Box 520067 Big Lake, AK 99652

Email: info@biglakechamber.org or apollo@mtaonline.net

Total Project Snapshot Report

FY 2009 Capital Budget

TPS Report 50551

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☒ Yes ☐ No

**Mike Szymanski**

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Senator Huggins,

I am interested in talking to you about a capital improvement for the State of Alaska Division of Parks campgrounds at Big Lake – both the North Shore campground and the South Shore campground. We are anxious to see boat launch docks constructed at both of these sites.

I am a member of the Big Lake Comprehensive Planning Committee and live on Big Lake. I also speak on behalf of the Amputee Support Group of Alaska whose members see a real need for better access to the lake.

Currently these campgrounds offer boat launch facilities, but they do not have a dock for loading passengers. Bill O'Hara (former owner of the Big Lake Arctic Cat House and past President of the Big Lake Chamber of Commerce) and Tim McGhan (McGhan Construction) both feel such launching docks would expand the use of the facilities and be revenue enhancements for the Division of Parks. Currently Burkshore is the only place where you can launch a boat and load passengers from a dock. Burkshore and South Port is privately owned, has limited space for parking, and is set up to take care of those who rent boat slips from them.

While each of the state facilities have boat launch ramps, neither have a dock adjacent to the ramp to allow people to get into the boats. This means passengers have to get wet in order to get into the boat after it is launched. They also must wade out into the water when loading or off loading boats on the ramp. For handicapped or physically impaired folks, it is almost impossible to load into the boats.

Tim McGhan has been constructing these docks (see attached) for years at Big Lake, and he estimates that the two docks put in on pilings would cost about \$20,000. I discussed this project with the Mat Su Parks Superintendent, Wayne Biessel, who also believes these launching docks would be a improvement to the area. The increased launch fees from the facilities would more than pay for any future maintenance.

I have attached drawings of the Finger Lake docks that Wayne Biessel provided as an example of what they have built with park staff. The type of docks Tim McGhan has built and are in use around Big Lake currently are of a simpler design. I have attached a copy of the McGhan type dock design, construction pictures and quite frankly while they are simplistic in nature; they are extremely sturdy and require little or no maintenance. They simply require some piling, stringers, decking and a few cleats. Likely the most cost effective way of building docks in Alaska, with a proven track record of endurance.

Back in the olden days, as my grandchildren would say, when I represented Big Lake in the Alaska State Senate, I was inundated with many requests for capital projects from constituents, so I appreciate the position you are in. I also understand the 90 session has squeezed the timeline of the capital budget process. But if this funding is delayed until next year, the earliest construction could be done would be in the winter of 2010. This is because

3/26/2008

piling for the dock must be driven during the winter months. So if at all possible, it would be appreciated if you could consider this project for funding this year. The piling could then be installed this winter and be online next summer.

This capital improvement will not only be a benefit to the Big Lake residents, but even more to all those who live in the valley and recreate on the lake in the summer.

Mike Szymanski

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# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

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April 1, 2008

Representative Mark Neuman  
State Capitol, Room 432  
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Public Docks: Big Lake State Recreation Site

Dear Representative Neuman,

This letter is to affirm our interest in seeing additional public docks constructed at state park units on Big Lake. It is my understanding that there are no public docks currently available on the lake, and there is a demand for better access to boats – particularly by individuals with mobility challenges. We would happy to work with you and our public constituents to have one or more docks installed. My only concern is that we consider any potential conflicts between swimmers and motorized boats at a dock, and I believe if designed appropriately, we can resolve these issues.

I also understand that the Big Lake Comprehensive Plan citizen's workgroup has discussed this need and will be endorsing this project as well.

Thank you for considering funding public recreational projects. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Regards,



Wayne Biessel  
Mat-Su Area Park Superintendent